

Del Ray Community Conversation Dec 12, 2019, Meeting Notes

Note: tables 2, 3 and 4 did not label their worksheets, so I had to combine them.

Table 1

Values:

- Sense of community through pride of local own shops.
- Value small businesses
- Unique character of the 2 neighborhoods: Arlandria and Del Ray
- Arlandria: diversity and ethnic food, etc
- Del Ray, small independent businesses
- Historic character of the neighborhood, maintaining it is important
- Walkability of Mt. Vernon
- Proximity to metro station
- Park trails, 4 Mile Run Trail
- Arts in the community

Issues:

- Worries about chains as we want to preserve local small businesses. Some anchors are OK.
- Walkability of Mt. Vernon ave, south of Monroe is not good
- Ped and bike safety in the neighborhood, especially in Arlandria. Continue connectivity to transit.
- Gaps in the bike network
- Trolley (on-car) connection between metro, Del Ray and Arlandria.
- How much retail is sustainable realistically?
- Would like west side access to metro station
- All season water fountains
- No restroom in parks
- Dark sidewalks at night, safety, business development, Christmas lights
- Community kiosks for posters, notices.

What we value currently:

- Mt. Vernon Ave as a cohesive business district (2005 plan)
- Walkability to metro station
- Neighborhood feel, parades, community
- Vibrant business district in Del Ray, but so many vacant storefronts in Chirilagua. Empty MVVC, need new restaurants and stores
- Birchmere
- Diversity
- Legacy of community engagement (Pat Miller, Ruby Tucker)
- Must preserve this ethnic, motivate, understand, working towards common good.
- "Specialness", neighborhood likeness, art on the avenue, web of relationships.
- Sustaining this is difficult and important.

Issues:

- Overcrowding in Chirilagua due to ruthless landlords and fear on the part of resident to speak up. Affordable housing is a big issue.
- Increase minimum wage
- Very difficult to have thriving retail shops in today's environment. Not enough foot traffic due to online shopping, etc.
- Rents are high
- Different needs of different businesses
- Need more people
- Rising property values due to Amazon

Tables 2, 3, 4:

- Lack of parking
- Love the neighborhood
- Need better signage
- Uneffective parking enforcement
- People are parking in residents' driveways
- No enforcement of resident parking spaces
- People park too close to the stop signs
- Parking on crosswalks
- Would love to see bike line on Commonwealth
- 4 Mile Run is great, we need to maximise its use
- Focus on pedestrian safety
- Need bus shelters
- Small town feel
- We need bike lanes
- Scooters are an issue to look at carefully
- Dangerous intersections can be improved by increasing visibility near intersections, parking problems penetrate into the neighborhoods.
- Need enforceable parking districts in neighborhood
- Intersection improvements and traffic calming at problem intersections
- Need good human-scale and things to fit the neighborhood
- Bring printed plans for folks without computers.
- Transit prices, including the Dash, senior citizen discounts only during off peak hours. Otherwise, buses and transit are pretty good.
- Look into better location for bus stops.
- Scooters, concerns over user safety and discarding of scooters in sidewalks
- Speed limits, does lowering speed limits have a difference?
- Sensor that catches drivers going over the speed limit
- Fast food restaurants leave garbage, cans in streets
- "Del Ray North" - concern over what sort of development is going on there, communication over existing project, CVS closing.
- Oakville triangle, concern of the redevelopment happening there, more open communication regarding development projects.

- Need more status updates regarding Potomac
- Old safeway lot, what's up there?
- Bei Kay Central/Bei Ray Tower redevelopment was well done, good neighborhood entrance.
- 4 Mile run improvements was good for bicycles, but need separate trails
- Good redevelopment happening here
- Arlandria floors building garage entrance is ugly, needs beautification
- Loss of small businesses due to online shopping, new development, not enough variety (too many restaurants)
- Affordable housing is a concern, what does Alexandria consider affordable?
- Redevelopment of large multifamily is a concern
- Improvements along Monroe have been great! Coffee shops and dog parks
- Amazon has claimed local businesses only in their developments, affordable retail
- More street lights and crosswalks
- Need more delis, bookstores, independent markets,
- There are empty storefronts, Audi dealership, car sales.

Table 5

- Look at Mom's space
- Playgrounds are a plus
- Traffic around Pat Miller
- Ancell/Commonwealth, near warwick are appears like there is a crosswalk
- Unused parking space in front of the old safeway; it's underutilized
- Park with glass
- Dark streets, lack of lighting on Reed
- Bike trails on Commonwealth
- Need continuous bike lanes.
- What is the longevity of human services Department?
- Like the walkable and local feel. Don't want Mt. Vernon to turn into King street.
- Need more daycares in the neighborhood
- Concern that people renting in Arlandria in Lynhaven will be priced out of the area.
- Aging in place is an important consideration and the City needs to ensure this.
- Pro 23 B's new route
- All the transit options are a big positive

Table 6

Loves:

- Sense of community
- Housing diversity, size/density difference
- No fan of chains (Walgreens, exception) Good kept building. Bright neon lights
- Small town feel
- Walkability
- Easily run errands, everything here is bikeable.

- Diversity, Arlandria near by
- Public transportation accessible
- Top things: walkability, diversity (land use, commercial, residential, acceptable of all types of people), very welcoming.

Negatives:

- Pedestrian safety
- Housing affordability
- Gentrification, especially Arlandria
- Plan should include that people in Arlandria and Del Ray should not be displaced
- Fear of potential redevelopment at GW
- Don't reduce amount of affordable housing
- Like the gradual, thoughtful redevelopment
- Amazon, tech can change character
- Unplanned growth
- Do better are keeping community.
- There is a lack of traffic and parking enforcement. Keep cars/trucks away from corners.
- Sidewalks are uneven
- Think about seniors residents and their safety.
- Create an overlay map showing a plan area and common neighborhood boundaries
- Plan needs to look at commercial and residential because they both impact each other

Big issues:

- Pedestrian safety
- Hard to cross Mt. Vernon Ave on a car, daylighting the intersections.
- Mixed use is good
- Connecting to metro - Py and Braddock close to heavy parking problems. There is a need of parking study.

Table 7

- Many potholes on Mt. Vernon Ave
- Visibility at intersections on Mt. Vernonr is horrible
- Safety issues, pedestrians aren't safe rossing.
- Cars are allowed to park up to corner
- More pedestrian education - in Britain/GW Camps, as you approach, crosswalk flash is a sound indication that tells ped to look up and left/right.
- Traffic management
- Dewitt irregular stop signs
- Custis/ Mt. Vernon or Del Ray and Mt Vernorn, should have a traffic light
- A dedicated bike lane would be good on Commonwealth
- Maybe a traffic study is warranted on Glebe and RT intersection
- Colosanto Park, DRCA is improving this park, how would that change the dynamic of the road intersection
- City matching funds on park?
- Parks are looking really good
- No rain gardens that collect trash, maintenance is an issue

- What activities can teens do outside? What programming on space allocation is there?
- Need social component, light supervision
- Chick arstrong used to have rolled skating on gym floor for teens
- Rec center activity that is STEM, art, robotics, mechanic automotive engineering, auto shop
- St. Elmos partners with businesses to paint and other activities in shop, or
- Advertising rec programing
- More street trees
- Car dealerships, are they staying? Historically Mt. Vernon Ave was an auto row
- Opposing for other uses when they do move
- Maintain some openness along Mt. Vernonr, more open space along avenue
- Buys next to GW, shone be preserved, kids need space to play, or put housing, mixed use on a portion of it.
- Arlandria and Del Ray should remain distinct
- Revitalize Arlinadria, Chirilagua Business Association as it would help maintain vitality
- Mv Village Ctr. Proj, follow Arlandria Plan? Took advantage of bonus dentisto to go high.
- How can Arlandria be protected?
- Trade off of Affordable Housing/density for neighborhood character
- Affordable business space, support small business is very important to these neighborhoods
- Del Ray business association works hard

Transportation

- Love the BRT on route 1, use is often
- Love Yates corner, seem very engaged in their surroundings/neighborhood
- Scooters are a challenge, not safe, can't see them, move much faster than a pedestrian
- Bicycle lanes for scooters

Table 8:

Don't Like:

- On Mount Vernon Ave, improve Kestersois "Look"
- Would NOT like a bike lane on Mt. Vernon Ave
- Lack of shared parking
- Lack of affordable housing and senior housing
- Condition of Mt. Vernon Elementary and GW Middle schools
- Recent street signage

Need:

- Community parking
- Pedestrian safety
- Lighting on Mt. Vernon avenue
- Keep "main street" feel
- Trolley service
- Another grocery store, fresh market

Like:

- Keep fields at Simpson, baseball and soccer
- Bus stop from Park square to next block, united Bank
- Mom and pop retail, no chains
- Mt. Jefferson Park, lightning
- Bus services and routes

Question:

- What will happen to buildings, block parking lot where the City Department of Human Services is now?
- BBT/block?

Table 9

- Community advisories, sparks learning, a way to meet people.
- Adult leagues, festivals, bar crawls, ladies night out, are a way of non-kid, focused events. Can we include more of these in Alexandria? And How do you find out about these events?
- It's dark on side streets
- Dark crosswalks, and we need more flashing crosswalks. For example: Mt. Vernon and Gifford, and Mt. Vernon and Del Ray.
- Parking on Simpson field is terrible
- Bigger houses are changing the look and feel of the neighborhood
- Our neighborhood is charming, walkable and close to DC
- 4 Mile run is great
- Outdoor space, it feels like a small town community
- Hops N Shine, Monday dog event on Mt. Vernon Ave
- Another store across Glebe
- Need recreation for adults